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DEPT. FOR SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR TIBETAN ISSUES U/S  
DOBRIANSKY

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SUBJECT: DALAI LAMA REQUESTS BUSH TO VISIT LHASA DURING  
BEIJING OLYMPIC TRIP

Classified By: Political Counselor Ted Osius for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: In a May 10 meeting, the Dalai Lama requested Poloff to convey a request to President Bush to visit Lhasa during the President's August 2008 Beijing visit.

He characterized the April 27-29 China-Tibet talks as "productive," noting that China's representatives adopted a "softer" tone than during the sixth round of formal talks in July, 2007. The Dalai Lama said that the dialogue was restricted to the United Front level with no back channel communications with the Chinese Communist Party and Politburo membership. He confided that the next round of China-Tibet talks is slated for the second week in June but stated that the exact date and place had yet to be determined by the Chinese government. The Dalai Lama emphasized that international pressure had "shamed and embarrassed" China into the recent dialogue and beseeched the US to maintain pressure on Beijing. The Dalai Lama lauded Secretary Rice's April statements regarding a potential US Consulate in Tibet, and exhorted the USG to continue urging China for a presence there, as a US presence there would deny Beijing sole control over reporting in the region. He forecast that violence in Tibet will increase for the next five to ten years given the attitudes of the current leadership. Contrary to media reports, on May 13 the Dalai Lama's Representative in Delhi denied that any offer was extended by the Chinese government for the Dalai Lama to visit Beijing during the 2008 Olympics.

END SUMMARY.

----- Dalai Lama requests the "Greatest leader from the most powerful nation" to visit Lhasa -----

12. (C) During a May 10 meeting in Dharamsala, the Dalai Lama referred to radio reports that the US Congress will request President Bush to visit Tibet during his Olympic trip in August 2008. He requested that Poloff relay his personal request for the President to visit Lhasa, and professed that, "the greatest leader from the most powerful nation visiting Lhasa would send a very strong message to the Chinese government." The Dalai Lama asserted that pressure from the international community to enter into a dialogue with the Tibetan government-in-exile "embarrassed and shamed" the Chinese government into holding the talks. Maintaining that the Chinese government was sensitive to world opinion, he implored the USG to maintain pressure on China to provide medical assistance to the Tibetans injured during protests and to allow international media access to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) to serve as a restraining influence on Chinese security forces. Turning to Secretary Rice's April 2008 comments about the possibility of opening a US

Consulate in Lhasa, the Dalai Lama stressed that it was "an excellent idea," and urged the USG to continue to pursue the possibility with the Chinese government. "Even if it does not happen for years," he articulated, "it still sends a strong message to the Chinese that America is watching."

----- China takes a softer tone during recent talks -----

13. (C) The Dalai Lama characterized the April 27-29 talks in Shenzhen between the Dalai Lama's representatives, Special Envoy Lodi Gyari and Kelsang Gyaltsen, and China's United Front Work Department representatives as "productive." He recounted that the Chinese side took a "softer" tone in the talks in contrast to the sixth round of official talks in July, 2007. Asserting that both were positive signs, he claimed that, rather than framing the talks as coincidental as in previous six rounds of official talks, the Chinese government notified the US and Indian ambassadors prior to announcing the talks publicly and President Hu Jintao disclosed the talks to the media beforehand. The Dalai Lama also revealed that the dialogue remained limited to the United Front level without any back channel communications with the Chinese Communist Party Politburo or Standing Committee membership. He cautioned that the nature of the Tibetan dialogue with China is cyclical with productive discussions in the 1980s followed by "stale" talks for over a decade. The positive atmosphere created in the fifth round in April, 2006, abruptly changed during the sixth round of talks in July, 2007, when China hardened its stance. Despite his offer to assist the Chinese in discussions with those in Tibet calling for independence and encouraging them to accept

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"meaningful autonomy" as an alternative, the Dalai Lama lamented that "the current Chinese leadership only knows the hammer." "Unlike Mao (Chairman Mao-Tse Tung) in the 1950s and Zhao (Zhao Ziyang) in the 1980s, who were quite reasonable, we will see more violence over the next five to ten years with the current cadres," he opined. The Dalai Lama confided that the next round of talks is scheduled for the second week in June, although he was still waiting for the Chinese side to confirm the date and venue.

----- "China can only find truth through reality" -----

14. (C) Emphasizing that recent uprisings by Tibetans throughout the TAR were the result of pent up frustrations caused by decades of Chinese government repression and the inexorable dilution of Tibetan culture through the migration of Han Chinese into the TAR, the Dalai Lama stressed that a long-term solution to the unrest lay with the Chinese government. "They (the Chinese government) must recognize the reality (of Chinese repression and planned destruction of the Tibetan culture) in Tibet," he asserted, adding, "Only after accepting this reality can the truth be realized, and a long-term solution can only be obtained from the truth." Signaling that the Tibetan government-in-exile was willing to drop its demand for the Chinese government to accept its historical version of the China-Tibet relationship, the Dalai Lama stated that, "although you cannot ignore history, we are willing to let it go." The Dalai Lama bemoaned China's strategy to systematically dilute Tibetan culture, language, and customs, and eventually the Tibetan race, through the introduction of millions of Han Chinese into the TAR. Harking back to his own travels in the 1950s to China's northeast, he claimed that China was successful in destroying the Uyghur, Manchurian, and Inner Mongolian cultures using the same modus operandi, and asked rhetorically, "How many Manchurians can you find in Dongbei today? Prior to 1907 you could find Manchurians everywhere." He observed that Mongolian culture will only be preserved due to the independence of the Mongolian state, although it was reported to him by "others" that the culture and language in Inner Mongolia was almost lost.

----- "Stop torturing and killing those that refuse to

denounce me."

¶5. (C) The Dalai Lama professed that he was unfazed by China's personal attacks against him and relayed that he encouraged Tibetans to denounce him in order to avoid torture and possible death. However, referring to recent actions by "re-education" forces which are abducting monks from their temples, he assailed the Chinese government for forcing Tibetans to denounce their Buddhist beliefs and begged that it "stop torturing and killing those that refuse to denounce me or Buddha. That really gets me angry," he confessed. He also warned that, "derogatory language against Buddhism only incensed the Tibetans more."

----- China's invitation to the Dalai Lama to visit -----

¶6. (C) On May 13, the Dalai Lama's Delhi Representative Tempa Tsering denied press reports that the Chinese government made overtures to Tibetan government-in-exile officials for the Dalai Lama to attend the Beijing Olympics. Also, contrary to media reports, Tsering claimed that the Dalai Lama had not yet considered any invitation to visit Beijing as "it would demand very careful consideration."  
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